

REMARKS

The Official Action mailed October 5, 2004, has been received and its contents carefully noted. Filed concurrently herewith is a *Request for One Month Extension of Time*, which extends the shortened statutory period for response to February 5, 2005.

The Applicants note with appreciation the consideration of the Information Disclosure Statements filed on July 28, 1999; February 11, 2002; February 15, 2002; November 25, 2003; and January 14, 2004.

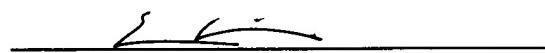
Claims 45-50, 52-54, 56-58, 60-62, 64, 65, and 67-72 were pending in the present application prior to the above amendment. Claims 67-72 have been canceled, and claims 45, 49, 52, 56, 60, and 64 have been amended to better recite the features of the present invention. Accordingly, claims 45-50, 52-54, 56-58, 60-62, 64, and 65 are now pending in the present application, of which claims 45, 49, 52, 56, 60, and 64 are independent. For the reasons set forth in detail below, all claims are believed to be in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

The Official Action rejects claims 45, 47, 60, 62, and 67-72 as obvious based on the combination of U.S. Patent No. 5,858,819 to Miyasaka and U.S. Patent No. 5,851,860 to Makita et al. The Official Action further rejects claims 46, 49-50, 52-54, 56-58, 61, and 64-65 as obvious based on the combination of Miyasaka, Makita et al., and U.S. Patent 6,066,516 to Miyasaka.

With reference to the Rule 132 Declaration of November 25, 2003, the Official Action notes on page 4 that "claims limited to nickel would overcome the rejections in view of the cited prior art references." In view thereof, the claims have been amended herewith to recite nickel and are believed to be allowable as noted in the Official Action. All claims are believed to be allowable and favorable reconsideration is requested.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable to place this application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,


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